



[Moses Kotane, 1905-1978](#)

The National Question

The attached document, divided into two parts, is large, but it is of great use because it covers the period under consideration from another point of view, while nevertheless confirming the general outline that we have drawn so far. It is from Brian Bunting's 1975 book, "**Moses Kotane, South African Revolutionary**".

Kotane was the author of the 1934 [Cradock Letter](#), "For Africanisation of the Party". Five years later Kotane became General Secretary of the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA) and subsequently of the SACP, holding the position from 1939 until his death in 1978. He was also at some stage Treasurer-General of the ANC, and an ANC NEC member.

This document was written by Brian Bunting, a participant and witness of the events described. The period covered was one of difficulty for the Party (the CPSA). Those who had ostensibly advocated the correct “line” at the correct moment, and who, perhaps for that reason, possessed the leadership, behaved with extreme cruelty towards other comrades who had been more circumspect about the adoption of the “native republic” thesis. Wave after wave of expulsions took place.

The sectarian period of party history is a lesson on how not to behave. In the end it is clear that there were great obstacles in the way of the execution of the native republic thesis, and that those who took the difficulties seriously were some of those, like Brian Bunting, Jack Simons, and Ray Alexander Simons, who survived; while those who had expelled their comrades, blaming them for the difficulties, and who ruled the Party like tyrants, did not last.

Moses Kotane [pictured] came through, survived, and is identified forever with the defence of the NDR and of the Alliance that the NDR required. It was on the surface an alliance between the SACP and the African National Congress, but at root it was, and remains, an alliance between proletarian and national-bourgeois class elements, for freedom, and against monopoly capital and imperialism.

There is nothing exceptional or unique to South Africa about class alliance. It is an organic, dialectical and necessary factor in all class-divided societies. Nor was it imposed. The following

excerpt from Brian Bunting's book is relevant:

“After he had left the Party, [Eddie] Roux was at pains to make out that the Native Republic resolution was imposed on The South African Communist Party from outside by a Comintern concerned more with the furtherance of its own interests and those of its biggest constituent element the Russian CP than with the interests of the South African people... the eventual Native Republic resolution flowed from an interchange of views between the Comintern and the CPSA, and was accepted in South Africa in terms of the policy of democratic centralism on which the international Communist movement was based.

“Certainly, there is no doubting that the impetus for the Native Republic resolution came from the nationally-minded elements in the South African CP...”

- The above is to introduce the original reading-text: [Moses Kotane, South African Revolutionary, Chapter 2, The National Question, Bunting.](#)
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